

Minutes
State Board of Education AIMS Study Session
June 16, 2005

The State Board of Education held a Special AIMS Study Session on June 16, 2005, at 1535 West Jefferson, Phoenix, Arizona 85007. The meeting was called to order at 1:35PM.

Members Present

Dr. Matthew Diethelm, President
Ms. JoAnne Hilde, Vice President
Superintendent Tom Horne
Mr. Jesse Ary
Ms. Nadine Basha
Ms. Joanne Kramer
Dr. Karen Nicodemus
Ms. Cecilia Owen

Members Absent

Dr. Michael Crow
Ms. Anita Mendoza
Dr. John Pedicone

1. Presentation, Discussion and Possible Consideration of Items Related to Senate Bill 1038.
Items for Discussion and Possible Consideration Include, But are Not Limited To:

A. Overview and Summary of Board Responsibilities

Mr. Vince Yanez, Executive Director, Arizona State Board of Education, presented an overview of SB 1038 as per attached document noting the required guidelines for pupils to be eligible for this augmentation credit:

- Must have taken AIMS at each time the test was offered when the pupil was eligible to take the test;
- Must have completed with a passing grade all coursework and credits prescribed for the graduation of pupils from high school; and
- Must have participated in any academic remediation program available in the pupil's school in the subject areas where the student failed to pass AIMS.

Mr. Yanez noted that the implementation of this bill has been delegated to the State Board and the Board is to have rules in place by September 1, 2005 for implementation. He added that the Board has discretion in determining this implementation within certain guidelines set forth by legislation:

- If the augmented score of a pupil exceeds the passing score on AIMS, that student shall be deemed to have completed the competency test requirement;
- The augmented scores shall only be used to determine whether the pupil meets the alternative graduation requirement established by this law;
 - This will not affect school profile data as it is strictly for graduation purposes
- The pupil may augment the score in each area where they failed to make a passing score in an amount not to exceed $\frac{1}{4}$ of the pupil's achieved score in that area
 - If a pupil received a scale score of 400 they could augment their score by 100
- The pupil may use the highest score earned in each area of AIMS administration
- Additional credits shall be based only the performance of the pupil in those courses that meet the requirements for graduation, per Board rule R7-2-302
 - Each course that receives additional credit shall receive equivalent additional credit regardless of the subject area except that greater additional credit shall be granted for courses with more advanced academic content related to the academic standards prescribed by the State Board
 - Grades "C" or better are eligible for additional credit and a varying amount of credit shall be prescribed for "A", "B", and "C" with an "A" receiving

proportionately greater credit than a “B” and a “B” receiving proportionately greater credit than a “C”.

Mr. Yanez outlined the research component of the legislation:

- The Board is to review the academic competency standards and performance measurement mechanisms used in at least ten other states that are identified as having the most effective K-12 education systems by one or more nationally recognized performance ranking
- The Board shall review the passing score established for the Mathematics portion of AIMS with a passing score established for similar tests in states with academic standards that are similar to Arizona’s
- The Board shall submit its findings to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House by January 31, 2006

Mr. Yanez noted that Dr. David Garcia has agreed to outline some suggestions for directions the State Board could go in meeting these requirements.

Mr. Yanez noted that the Board should engage in discussions today and answer questions regarding what its responsibilities are. Following these discussions, it is hoped the Board can focus on a few key areas that would guide the stakeholder group, to be appointed by the Board, so the group works in a direction that the Board is comfortable with. Mr. Yanez proposed some questions to be addressed:

- What is the Board’s expectation relative to augmenting students’ scores?
- What courses should count for additional credit?
- Does the Board wish to conduct research to assist in its discussions?
- Determine Board membership on subcommittee that will formulate specific recommendations to the Board
- Members may present any additional questions or discussion items related to SB1038

Motion to go into Executive Session by Dr. Nicodemus and seconded by Ms. Hilde. The State Board went into Executive Session at 1:50PM. Motion by Ms. Basha and seconded by Ms. Kramer to reconvene at 2:05PM.

Superintendent Horne stated that he had requested an informal letter from the Attorney General regarding the legal interpretations of statute and that the Attorney General’s Office asked him to request a formal opinion, which he did. Mr. Horne added that he has now been asked to withdraw that request and hereby withdrew his request.

Dr. Diethelm noted that this now gives the opportunity for the Board to interpret the statute as to what is best for Arizona students.

B. Formulation of a Policy Framework for the Augmentation Of Students’ AIMS Scores as Required by Senate Bill 1038.

Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03 (A), the Board may vote to go into Executive Session, which will not be open to the public, for legal advice concerning any item on this agenda or to review records exempt by law from public inspection.

Mr. Yanez opened the discussion suggesting that members ask general questions which can be followed by discussion of key questions:

Dr. Diethelm:

- Number of not more than 25% of augmentation; is SBE free to choose any percent between 0-25% and how much should the augmentation be?

Ms. Hilde:

- Comfortable with 25%; why a consideration for less?
- How much augmentation is necessary sounds like a research based question
- A Sub-committee can't be so complicated that it can't be administered

Ms. Basha:

- Need a mechanism for implementation of this project

Ms. Kramer:

- How many of next year's seniors have passed the test?
 - Information not available as it is not matched with attendance data
 - Should have answer within two weeks per Dr. Franciosi

Dr. Nicodemus:

- Are we talking only about remediation during the school day?
- Should coursework mirror AIMS and does it count in college coursework background?
 - Mirrors broadly to any of the 20 credits and narrowly toward any subject that meets the graduation requirement per Superintendent Horne

Mr. Yanez:

- Need a rational way to assign augmentation points

Ms. Hilde:

- This is a bridge for 06-07 and we are not looking at something that significantly alters any aspect of AIMS; asked Legislature not to utilize a bridge that alters AIMS scores
- What about classes that are on a vocational track?

Dr. Nicodemus:

- Need to consider the weight of coursework that is determined by local school districts

Superintendent Horne:

- The narrow interpretation would allow courses in Math, English, Social Studies, Science Arts and Vocational

Dr. Diethelm:

- Some courses may contain math or science and therefore has the same "weight" as determined for any other science course

Ms. Owen:

- Would the information to be gleaned per SB 1038 be helpful in making this decision?
- Can we see if other states have used augmentation and if so, what effects this has had?

Superintendent Horne:

- When we need to know what other states are doing, we usually go the Conference of Chief State School Officers and will request this information from them as well and report back to the SBE

Ms. Owen:

- What does this decision do to the next plan?

Dr. Diethelm:

- SBE wants to be consistent and correct, fostering continuous improvement in education
- Forecasted that after looking at other programs, Arizona's SBE will still have to make its own decision for our state

Mr. Ary:

- Didn't get the impression that the SBE could change the percentage called for by legislature
- 25% augmentation should not be seen as a bail out as some in the general public might suggest

- Test needs to be re-aligned to create a more equal playing field for all students throughout the state
- Determine what out-of-state assessments are similar to AIMS as it applies to transfer students
- Short timeline to make determination and need to expand contacts outside this body

Dr. Diethelm:

- Need to delegate a sub-committee in lieu of attempting to call all eleven SBE members together

Dr. Nicodemus:

- Need to consider maximum number of points students can achieve via coursework and the difference between weighted and non-weighted courses

Mr. Yanez:

- Need consensus regarding percentages allowable or ask the sub-committee to formulate recommendations to the SBE

Ms. Hilde:

- A student with all C's should have enough points to move to the bridge

Mr. Yanez:

- Need an individualized formula to determine what the weight of the classes are

Superintendent Horne:

- Use a uniform formula then add score to AIMS score to see if they pass

Dr. Diethelm:

- Need to consider AP and regular courses and amount of augmentation

Superintendent Horne:

- All courses count but SBE can require which subjects can count for graduation (11.5 credits as per Board rule R7-2-302)
- Student's average is determined by non- all elective courses which has the benefit of simplicity per the statute

Mr. Yanez:

- There are 20 credits required for graduation and 11 ½ of those credits will be counted with 8 ½ credits open
- For the framework of the sub-committee the Board will want to count only the 11 ½ credits as there is not a uniform standard for electives

Ms. Hilde:

- Student can choose best of scores for graduation credits

Ms. Jill Osborne, Assistant Attorney General regarding the use of a course to augment score:

- Any course going toward graduation can be used

Ms. Basha:

- Need definitions/guidelines and working models to see various outcomes before decisions can be made

Ms. Kramer:

- Look at remediation issue as many students may not avail themselves of remediation until close to the end of school

Further discussion ensued with the following points being made:

- Some students may have been unable to get tutoring
- Emphasis should remain for students to do all they can to remediate and increase their knowledge and now they have the opportunity to augment their score with this process
- The purpose is to encourage students to do their best and take advantage of all

opportunities offered

- Comfortable with passage of this to say that students will avail themselves
- Look at remediation funds and see if services can be available during school
 - “working lunches”, etc.
- Effective Fall '05 which serve the bridge for 06-07
- Will make it incumbent on schools as they develop tutoring services, etc.

Superintendent Horne:

- \$5.7M available in failing schools tutoring fund
- Definition of those eligible was expanded by legislature to include any student who still needs to pass AIMS to graduate
- \$5M in budget for tutoring under the Dropout Prevention and AIMS Tutoring Fund
- Recommendations are being taken from each Board member and will be utilized to compile a written list for Board consideration

Dr. Ildi Lazcko-Kerr, Director of Student Information Management and Accountability Reporting, Scottsdale Unified School District, noted the following regarding tutoring programs developed by districts independent of the AIMS tutoring program:

- Offered during the day, after school, night school, etc.
- Many students didn't avail themselves of the AIMS tutoring since they were already receiving many hours of tutoring
- There should be some flexibility at the district level to choose whether or not the student should avail themselves of every single opportunity or from an array of opportunities
- Districts/schools that did call for the AIMS tutoring program there was a short notice of these programs from ADE and they were unable to adjust schedules
- Consider a waiver program for districts to apply for to the ADE on behalf of the student in extenuating circumstances

Dr. Lazcko-Kerr offered to serve on a subcommittee or give further information/assistance if requested to do so.

It was noted by Ms. Osborne that the language of the statute requires the student to have taken remediation every time it was offered and does not allow for any deviations from that requirement.

Dr. Nicodemus asked for the number of students who took the test each time it was available.

Mr. Ary:

- Can address this issue in Fall Legislative Agenda in an effort to err on the side of the student in case there were circumstances that the student could not take the test.

Ms. Owen:

- Need information regarding how other states have handled these types of issues in order to make informed decisions

C. Research Options to Assist the Board in Complying with the Requirements of Senate Bill 1038

Dr. David Garcia, AEPI, ASU, addressed the Board stating that September 1 is a short timeline to do empirical research. Dr. Garcia stated that he can assist in state comparisons but was not prepared with models as mentioned by Ms. Basha.

Dr. Garcia noted that his perspective is from a research base to gather an empirical basis on the relationship between the three variables in SB 1038 which are grades, types of courses, and course content. He noted that he will be trying to find data that links all three elements to see exactly where students fall that have different combinations of grades, types of courses, and level of content. This will give the Board an idea of the differential/gap for various types of students. He

added that September 1 is a very short timeline to gather any empirical data.

Ms. Basha asked if he sees any pitfalls in parameters discussed to this point and Dr. Garcia responded that we don't know what the student "looks like" or who may meet the standard in regards to course offerings and grades.

Discussion ensued and included the following points:

Dr. Nicodemus:

- Legislature should have asked for research in advance of passing the statute
- Don't want to disengage a population of students
- Would like to see some scenarios that would assist the Board in making decisions

Ms. Hilde:

- Struggles with what happens afterwards
- Could the committee build a framework and then look at students' folders to see how this impacts each student and whether it would make a difference

Dr. Garcia:

- Will not test the impact on a total number of students
- Could set up prototypical types of students and see if these students would pass
- Need to see if these students get enough points to pass

Ms. Owen:

- Have to use data to drive decisions or we will do a disservice to schools/teachers

Mr. Ary:

- We have enough time/capability to go to districts with the highest percentage of failing students and ask for anonymous student information to see what is needed

Dr. Garcia:

- Student data needs to be linked back to AIMS scores and is not available with student grades/course descriptions/AIMS scores linked. Would take a significant effort at the local level where it has not been put into a system that can be queried quickly.

Dr. Nicodemus:

- What is the impact, in terms of limiting this to only 11½ of the 20 credit hours, based on the students that do not meet AIMS requirements.

Dr. Garcia:

- Asked for approximately 6 weeks to gather and clean data to present analysis to the SBE
- Very little time to analyze looking at timeline imposed by legislature
- Probably best to build hypothetical student and at a later time look at actual student data

Mr. Yanez:

- The State Board is exempt from the rulemaking process requirements for this particular bill

Ms. Basha:

- Concerned about making public policy decisions without reliable data
- Members need to have timely, concrete information to assist in decision making
- AIMS needs to work well for students

Dr. Garcia:

- Now is the time to collect data to assist legislature in understanding the relationship between course content, curriculum, grades and AIMS scores

Ms. Owen:

- Need to look at impact of tutoring

Dr. Garcia:

- Recommend a longer term of research that includes coursework, tutoring and any other variables the State Board wants to include

- Would not be completed by September 1
- Would provide a database and format that can be queried
- Could look at hypothetical models by August

Dr. Diethelm:

- Can districts generate their hypothetical model from local data to assist in this analysis?

Dr. Garcia:

- Can build a model based on hypothetical students as an anchoring point using course grades, types of courses, etc.

Ms. Hilde:

- Requested Mr. Yanez to continue the conversation with Dr. Garcia to refine the requests and work on a practical timeline
- Need models of how students will be impacted and data to utilize in decision making regarding augmenting scores

Ms. Owen:

- Cite schools that have had success with tutoring programs; some that look distinctive and have successful results

Superintendent Horne;

- Best Practices section is also looking at this information

Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan, Associate Superintendent of Academic Achievement, Arizona Department of Education, stated that part of the school district evaluations includes information regarding the number of students that availed themselves to tutoring, whether they showed improvement and whether they passed AIMS.

Dr. Garcia:

- Proposal as presented is included in today's materials packet
 - Will include standards performance measures, test scores and the report required on behalf of the State Board
- Research related provisions requires a review of the academic competency standards and performance measurements mechanisms from at least ten states identified as having the most effective school systems according to one or more rankings
- Review and modify the AIMS passing scores that are statistically comparable
- Will also look at funding and other factors in each state
- Review each of the ten states' academic standards, state testing programs and student retention/promotion policies
 - Some states will not have high school graduation tests
- Report will be given by mid-October
- May be interesting for the legislature to see that many of the ten most effective states don't have competency tests

See outline of proposal provided in materials packet.

Dr. Diethelm:

- One or two border states should be included
- States that are most emphasizing standards and competency exams are those that are at the bottom and trying to move up via this methodology

Superintendent Horne:

- On NAEP scores, northern tier states score higher and southern tier states score lower

Dr. Nicodemus:

- Is it appropriate to use 5 states that have testing and 5 states that do not have standardized

testing

Dr. Diethelm noted that in terms of quantity the SBE is interested in peers and Dr. Garcia recommended making the report and adding other states for the SBE to use separately in guiding their decision.

2. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There were no other requests from the public to speak to the Board.

Results from today's meeting were summarized by Mr. Yanez:

- Will convene a stakeholders' committee
 - Important to have a few (recommended two) SBE members on the committee
 - Members can indicate their availability to serve on the committee to Mr. Yanez
 - Dr. Diethelm will participate on committee
 - Clearly communicate intermediate steps of committee's work to the Board on a weekly basis
 - Heavy time commitment over the next two months
 - Need support and input from the ADE
- Makeup of stakeholders' committee
 - AEA recommendations
 - 3 members high school focused
 - English, Math, Guidance Counselor
 - Two Governing Board members
 - Three Administrators
 - One or two parents
 - Two technical experts
 - One charter school person
- Have guideline regarding which courses will count

A recap of the group's consensus:

- Core participants should attend regularly and other SBE members are welcome to drop in and observe
- Must comply with open meeting law
- Need a special session prior to the August 27 State Board meeting
- Mr. Yanez has been instructed to have a conversation with Dr. Garcia regarding the research project and outlining the criteria for the plan to be submitted to the SBE

3. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Hilde. Seconded by Dr. Nicodemus. Meeting adjourned at 4:40PM.